

Private Veterinary Colleges in the District of Columbia: C. Barnwell Robinson's United States College of Veterinary Surgeons

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Around the end of the nineteenth century, a number of private veterinary colleges were established in the United States to fill a need for producing more trained veterinarians, especially in urban settings. Two years after the National Veterinary College opened in Washington, DC, in October 1892, Dr. C. Barnwell Robinson became the principal force behind founding the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons (USCVS).

This paper focuses on the establishment and operation of C. Barnwell Robinson's USCVS in Washington, DC, for 33 years from 1894 to 1927.



Figure 1. Charles Barnwell Robinson, VS, founder of the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons. Source: *Centaur* [USCVS class of 1917 yearbook]. Courtesy C. Trenton Boyd

C. Barnwell Robinson, Founder

Originally from St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada, and born to English parents, Charles Barnwell Robinson, VS (1859–1921)^{1,2} (Fig. 1) had already completed a 2-year course at the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph in 1879 with first honors in science and veterinary medicine before enrolling in the Montreal Veterinary College (later McGill University Faculty of Comparative Medicine and Veterinary Science). Having been taught by Duncan McEachran and William Osler, Robinson received his VS degree with honors in 1882 and then practiced for 5 years in Wheeling, West Virginia, the first graduate veterinarian in that state.

Shortly after relocating to Washington, DC, in March 1888, he was appointed as District Veterinarian and also served as Fire Department Veterinarian. In the latter role, he was responsible for selecting, testing, feeding, maintaining, healing and treating injuries, and retaining more than 1,100 strong,

fast horses that pulled heavy fire engines and other apparatus to fight fires around city streets.³

In 1890, Dr. Robinson was appointed veterinary surgeon to the US Government's War Department and held this position for 4 years before resigning.^{4,5,6} In 1898, he was reappointed, holding the position for another 4 years, before resigning again. The Spanish-American War had so increased the duties of that office, it materially interfered with his other interests.⁷ As examples of payments made to him, a Secretary of War's report to Congress on contingency expenses for the fiscal year ending June, 30, 1905, showed Dr. Robinson was paid \$18.00, \$9.50, \$4.50, and \$22.50 for unspecified "veterinary services."⁸

In addition, Dr. Robinson helped organize the Veterinary Association of the District of Columbia in 1894.⁹ He "was elected the first President of this organization, holding this position for four years, when he declined a renomination."¹⁰ This group met weekly, but attendance and accomplishments were reported to be "erratic" due to a lack of a unified effort among the members.¹¹ Nevertheless, as of 1908, the association was "still in existence and in a flourishing condition, having a very large membership."¹²

Incorporation and Purpose

Articles of incorporation for the USCVS were filed on February 24, 1894, by Dr. Robinson and supported by several interested parties.^{13,14} Among them were Charles H. Ford, Samuel Bensinger, Thomas Reed, and George A. Prevost, LLB. In addition to being Treasurer, Prevost, a patent attorney, served as trustee and the school's legal counsel during its entire 33-year existence. He also taught veterinary jurisprudence.

As stated, the "object of the institution is to teach the art and science of veterinary surgery and medicine." Furthermore, "It proposes thirteen professorships, viz.: Botany and zoology, chemistry, physiology, histology, theory and practice of medical

surgery, practical anatomy, veterinary materia medica, pathology, with special postmortem examinations, veterinary obstetrics, cattle pathology, entozoon of domestic animals, dental surgery, sanitary science, and veterinary jurisprudence.”¹⁵

By 1891, Dr. Robinson had established a successful practice in the District and was able to build “a large and commodious Hospital at 222 C Street, NW (Fig. 2a,b), and equipped it with every modern appliance.” Located at the foot of Capitol Hill, the veterinary school began instruction and its clinical work from Robinson’s Veterinary Hospital (Fig. 3a,b,c). [Unfortunately, that block of C Street has been subject to Interstate highway construction and is now covered by the Frances Perkins Building housing the US Department of Labor.]¹⁶

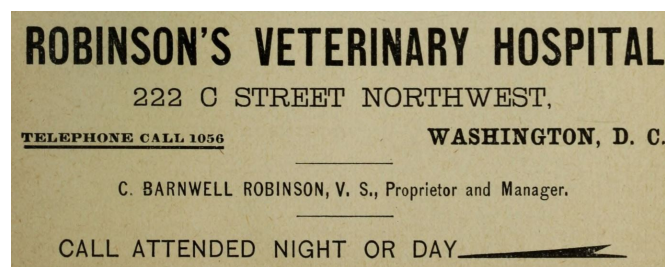


Figure 2a. Advertisement in Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia 1894, p. 843. Source: *HathiTrust Digital Library*, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiuo.ark:/13960/t5w69wv91>

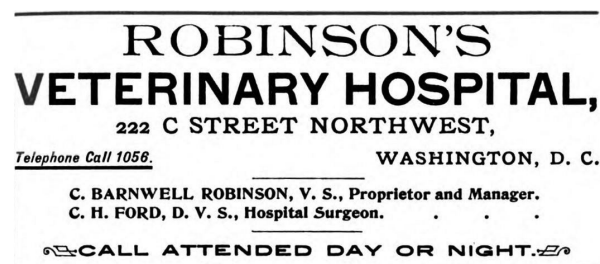


Figure 2b. Advertisement in Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia 1896, p. 784. Source: *HathiTrust Digital Library*, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiug.30112107850056>

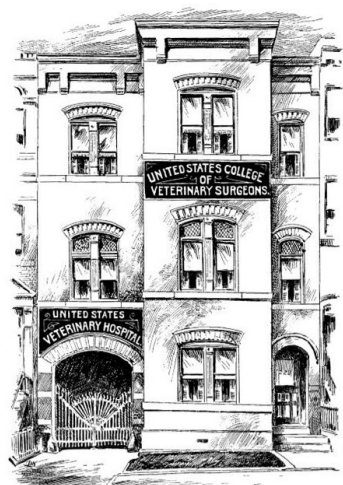


Figure 3a. Drawing of United States Veterinary Hospital and United States College of Veterinary Surgeons located at 222 C Street NW, circa 1894. Source: United States College of Veterinary Surgeons [prospectus], 1894-95.

Dr. Robinson, who was in charge of the school's clinic, was also Veterinarian to the District Government and had charge of all horses owned by the Government of the District of Columbia.¹⁷

In addition to treating urban working horses, a “mixture of canine, and but a sprinkling of bovine,”¹⁸ the *Washington Post*¹⁹ announced when the school opened that Cecil French, DVS, a graduate of the veterinary college at McGill University, would open a “scientific specialty” clinic for “treatment of diseases and injuries of dogs, cats and other small animals.” Hospital accommodations were provided, and patients seen at the USCVS on C Street.

Along with extensive experience with horses and an unlimited number of small animals at the Hospital at 222 C Street NW, prospective students were informed that they could also gain outdoor practice at most of the large stables in the city and surrounding country. In particular, the 1917 *USCVS Catalogue* noted,²⁰

“In addition to these clinics our students accompany members of the faculty on their various calls. Aside from the private practice of the staff and faculty, the students visit the various Government experimental farms in and around Washington, such as the Animal Husbandry and Dairy Farm at Beltsville, Maryland, the Plant Industry Farm at Arlington, Virginia, and the Naval Academy Dairy Farm at Gambrill, Maryland.”



Figure 3b. Robinson's Veterinary Hospital and United States College of Veterinary Surgeons located at 222 C Street NW, circa 1908. Source: *Centaur Class of '08*. Washington, DC: United States College of Veterinary Surgeons, 1908. *HathiTrust Digital Library*, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiug.30112100630679>

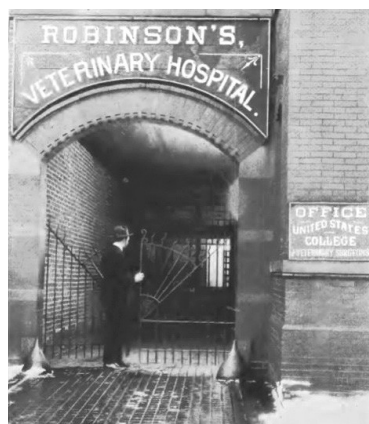



Figure 3c. Breezeway entrance to Robinson's Veterinary Hospital. Source: *Views in and around-- the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons*. Washington, DC: The United States College of Veterinary Surgeons, [after 1908]. *US National Library of Medicine Digital Collection*, <https://collections.nlm.nih.gov/catalog/nlm:nlmuid-9504098-bk>

UNITED STATES COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS,

222 C Street N. W., Washington, D. C.

SESSION 1895-96 BEGINS OCTOBER 1st.

 For prospectus and full information, address

C. BARNWELL ROBINSON, V. S. DEAN.

Figure 4. Announcement. Source: *Journal of Comparative Medicine and Veterinary Archives*. 15:xii, 1894. *HathiTrust Digital Library*, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015070491058>

In addition, the college had its own livestock facility outside the District in Virginia. “*The Farm in connection [which] contains some 700 acres, and is used as an auxiliary to the Hospital. It is located on the Virginia shore of the Potomac River, with railway passing through it, and can be reached within one hour from city.*”²¹ Those interested in livestock inspection could thus learn about sanitary work as well.

Along with the District’s National Veterinary College founded in 1892, the United States College, initially a 2-term college, was one of 9 or 10 new schools, 5 of which were commercial or private enterprises, that opened after the AVMA had recommended a 3-year curriculum and 4-person faculty as minimum requirements for schools of veterinary medicine (Fig. 4). Miller²² notes that “at no other moment in veterinary educational history had quite so many schools opened in such a short time—all conducting the 2-year curriculum, despite the intending new-member requirements rule of 1893.”

In August 1896, the *American Veterinary Review*²³ took sufficient notice to remark, “*The announcement for the coming session of this college is probably the most artistically printed and arranged catalogue that has ever been issued by an American veterinary college, profusely illustrated by splendid half-tones.*”

Faculty and Curriculum

Dr. Robinson was elected president of the board of trustees, a position he held until the time of his death in 1921. In addition to being dean until September 1912, Robinson was also Professor of Theory and Practice and Sanitary Medicine (Fig. 5). Other fundamental faculty members provided instruction over the years.^{24,25,26} In particular, in 1908, professors of comparative medicine and veterinary science included²⁷ Harry W. Acheson, DVS, Professor of Obstetrics; Walter W. Alleger, PharmD, MD, Professor of Bacteriology and Microscopy; F.M. Ashbaugh, DVS, Professor of Sanitary Medicine and Zootechnics; C.H. Bowker, MD, Professor of Physiology; H.S. Drake, DVS, Professor of Cattle Pathology; Chas. M. Emmons, MD, LL.M., Professor of Neurology; William A. Hedrick, AM, PhD, Professor of Chemistry; John C. Heide, DVS, Professor of Dental Surgery; H.F. Hungerford, DVS, Demonstrator in Anatomy; J.H. Mitchell, Esq, Professor of Horse Shoeing; George A. Prevost, LLB, Professor of Veterinary Jurisprudence; C. Barnwell Robinson, VS, Professor of Theory and Practice; M. Page Smith, DVS, Professor of Anatomy; Robt. C. Talty, DVS, Professor of Hippology; C.C.

Walker, AB, MD, DVS, Professor of General Pathology and Histology; Elias S. Walmer, VS, Professor of Canine Practice; and C.C. Weeks, DVS, Professor of Materia Medica.

In 1917, the Twenty-third *Catalogue* of the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons listed the following officers and faculty:²⁸

Board of Trustees

C. Barnwell Robinson, President

George A. Prevost, Treasurer

James L. Norris, Jr., Acting Secretary

Dean of Faculty

Hulbert Young, VMD

Faculty

Hulbert Young, VMD, Dean of the Faculty and Professor of Surgery

George A. Prevost, LLB, Professor of Jurisprudence

H.A. Hedrick, PhD, Professor of Chemistry

F.M. Ashbaugh, DVS, Professor of Meat and Milk Inspection, Sanitary Medicine

Cornelius C. Weeks, DVS, Professor of Materia Medica, Toxicology, Therapeutics

Charles H. Bowker, AB, MD, DVS, Professor of Histology and Physiology

H. Stanley Gamble, DVS, Professor of Comparative Medicine

J. Herman Muller, DVS, Professor of Anatomy

Vincent E. Lynch, AB, Professor of Biology and Parasitology, Instructor in Anatomy, Instructor in English and Medical Terminology

A.M. Macnamee, MD, Professor of Bacteriology and Pathology

M.A. Pozen, PharmD, BS Chem, Professor of Pharmacy

C.E. Dornheim, MDC, Professor of Obstetrics, Canine and Cattle Practice

R.P. Norton, BS, ChE, Instructor in Chemistry

A.V. Thomas, Instructor in Shoeing and Balancing

R.H. Ruffner, BS Agric, Professor of Zootechnics

Joseph E. Hodge, DVM, Professor of Dentistry, Demonstrator of Anatomy and Surgical Restraint

Roy L. Sexton, Laboratory Instructor for Histology, Embryology, Physiology

C.B. Robinson, VS, Hospital Clinician

C.R. Smith, Registrar

Hospital Department

C.B. Robinson, VS, Chief Surgeon

H. Stanley Gamble, DVS, Surgeon

C.C. Weeks, DVS, Visiting Surgeon

J.H. Muller, DVS, Visiting Surgeon

C.E. Dornheim, MDC, Visiting Surgeon

In addition to its regular faculty, some well-known visiting instructors²⁹ delivered lectures. For example, in 1899, presentations were given by John R. Mohler of the Bureau of Animal Industry on meat inspection and parasitology; by Charles H. Dawson, who was formerly at the Columbian University Veterinary Department, on general pathology; and by Rush Shippen Huidekoper on anatomy.

Student Enrollment and Curriculum Length

Beginning with 10 students its first year in 1894, the initial class of 4 graduates received their degrees in 1895.^{30,31} At first, the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Science (D.V.S.) was conferred,³² but it was replaced by the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.) in later years, at least after 1917.³³ The College also established a Fellowship degree to confer on scientific and professional men.³⁴

At commencement exercises on April 16, 1896, two students received diplomas.³⁵ (Fig. 6) In addition, the trustees announced that the college course would hereafter consist of 3

sessions of 6 months each, and thanked the gentlemen who had contributed to the support of the college in the past.³⁶ As a result, starting with the academic year 1896–1897, the school began offering a 3-year curriculum of 2 sessions each for the 15 students registered. At that time, the lecture fee was \$65 per annum and \$5 matriculation each year. The school also offered the matriculation examination recommended by the Association of Veterinary Faculties of North America.^{37,38}

Prospectus catalogs and advertisements specified tuition and fees for students enrolled at the USCVS. Interestingly, tuition was listed as \$115 for each session in 1894–1895,³⁹ then \$65 per session with a \$5.00 matriculation fee per session in 1895 and 1896,^{40,41} \$70 per session in 1901,⁴² \$110 plus \$5 or \$10 each year in 1908–09,⁴³ and \$130 the first year, \$125 second and third years, and \$135 the fourth year in 1917.⁴⁴

The USCVS also accommodated students with various academic backgrounds.⁴⁵ It was noted that,

“The college has also very materially extended its list of qualifications for the degree of fellowship. In addition to the previous requirements, the applicant, if a graduate from a medical school, must have done some research-work in comparative medicine which has been of value to the veterinary world. He must submit a thesis on a new subject to have sufficient merit to be accepted by the college, and to be used by them in the compilation of a work on veterinary science. He is required to fill out an application blank, which will be furnished on application.”

At the USCVS commencement on April 15, 1897,⁴⁶ Mr. Langdon, as valedictorian of the class, gave an outline of the course, how it differs from that of many other schools. Professor Prevost, on behalf of the trustees, showed the close

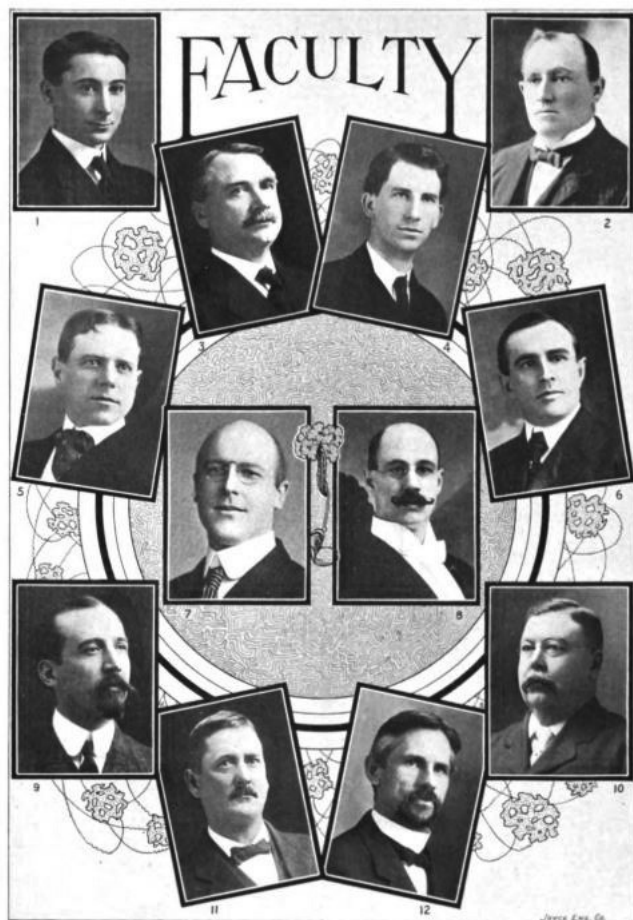


Figure 5. USCVS faculty pictured in Centaur Class of '08 yearbook, 1908. 1. H.F. Hungerford, 2. C. Barnwell Robinson, 3. Geo. A. Prevost, 4. M. Page Smith, 5. C.C. Weeks, 6. Robt. C. Talty, 7. F.M. Ashbaugh, 8. C.C. Walker, 9. C.H. Bowker, 10. Elias S. Walmer, 11. H.S. Drake, 12. Wm. A. Hedrick. Source: *Centaur Class of '08*. Washington, DC: United States College of Veterinary Surgeons, 1908. *HathiTrust Digital Library*, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiug.30112100630679>

UNITED STATES COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS, 222 C STREET, N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.

The course of instruction is graded and conforms to the rules adopted
by The Association of Veterinary Faculties of North America.

LECTURE FEES, - - \$65.00 PER ANNUM.

For Prospectus and full information, address

C. BARNWELL ROBINSON, V.S., Dean.

Figure 6. Announcement. Source: *Journal of Comparative Medicine and Veterinary Archives*. 17: xii, 1896 Aug. *HathiTrust Digital Library*, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015070490944>



Figure 7. Seal of the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons.

Source: *Centaur Class of '08*. Washington, DC: United States College of Veterinary Surgeons, 1908. *HathiTrust Digital Library*, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiug.30112100630679>

relationship between students and professors and closed with the motto of the college, *Vestigia Nulla Retrorsum* [translated as “No backward steps”] (Fig. 7).

By 1908, 108 students were studying at the school. Over the years, the USCVS produced 419 graduates by the time it closed in 1927.⁴⁷ A list of fellows and graduates through 1916 indicated that a number were employed by the US Bureau of Animal Industry.⁴⁸

AVMA Membership

In earlier times, it was not essential even for graduate veterinarians to be members of the American Veterinary Medical Association as that national professional organization was developing. Level of education was an important membership criterion, and applications needed to be vouchered by several existing members. Evidence has not been found to indicate that Dr. Robinson was ever a member, even though he is listed as attending USVMA conventions, such as at Nashville in 1897 as “another member of the profession.”⁴⁹

Nevertheless, at the AVMA meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1898, “Dr. C. Barnwell Robinson, of Washington, D.C., represented the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons, and thinks that Washington should be the next place of meeting.”⁵⁰ In addition, he is also known to have attended the USVMA’s Congress of Veterinary Colleges of North America in Buffalo, New York, in July 1894⁵¹ and been a representative at AVMA meetings of the Association of Veterinary Faculties and Examining Boards of North America.

Thus, it is curious and unexplained why there would be a report in the 44th *AVMA Proceedings* in 1907 to indicate that C. Barnwell Robinson, USCVS dean and president, and M. Page Smith, DVS, a 2-year USCVS graduate and its anatomy professor, were among 7 veterinarians for whom the AVMA Executive Committee voted to reject membership applications and specified return of their \$8 application fees.^{52,53}

Concerning membership for his students, the USCVS was not listed as one of the veterinary colleges whose graduates were eligible to apply for AVMA membership for 1909.⁵⁴

Moreover, a year earlier, the USCVS had also not appeared on the AVMA’s previous list of endorsed veterinary colleges at its 44th annual meeting in 1907.⁵⁵

USDA-AVMA Recognition 1908

As of 1908, over 800 veterinarians were employed in various kinds of work for the US Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI). In order to provide qualified inspectors to implement the BAI’s 1906 Meat Inspection program, the United States Department of Agriculture had begun conducting onsite inspections of veterinary colleges.^{56,57,58} In spring of 1908, an expert committee of 5 reputable veterinarians was appointed to visit 18 veterinary schools throughout the United States and one in Canada and to report on equipment and teaching facilities as well as identify a course of instruction to qualify graduates for the civil service examination. A 3-member subcommittee visited the USCVS on April 21, 1908.

Among the many recommendations presented in the USDA report^{59,60,61} issued on June 1, 1908, was “Recommendation No. 13: Classification of Veterinary Colleges” which arranged visited schools into 3 categories. Classified on the basis of courses of instruction given, Class B consisted of those colleges whose graduates would be allowed to take the US Civil Service examination for Veterinary Inspector in the Bureau of Animal Industry subsequent to 1898 but were not recommended in the report. In comparison, Class A school graduates were recommended as being eligible for the exam, while Class C schools either had no graduates or recent ones who were not eligible and not recommended.

The USCVS was one of 4 schools listed in Class B^{62,63} (Fig. 8).

Class B :^b

Cincinnati Veterinary College.
Grand Rapids Veterinary College.
McKillop Veterinary College.
United States College of Veterinary Surgeons.

Figure 8. Report and Recommendations Regarding Veterinary Colleges in the United States. BAI Circular No. 133, 1908 p. 44,50. *HathiTrust Digital Library*, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.b4200306>

Furthermore, “Recommendation No. 25” of that same report specified that any 3-year graduate of a Class B college matriculated as of June 1, 1908, could take the civil service examination for USDA Veterinary Inspector.^{64,65} All of the recommendations were intended to become effective for the 1908–1909 academic year.

As expected, at that 45th annual meeting of the AVMA in September 1908 in Philadelphia, there was considerable concern and discussion regarding the USDA’s report. Nevertheless, Miller acknowledges that the convention “generally endorsed the US Secretary of Agriculture’s approved report for the long-term beneficial effects it might exert on the nation’s veterinary medical educational system.”^{66,67}

Those recommendations were formalized in the USDA BAI Circular No. 133, dated July 6, 1908, and rewritten a year later as Circular 150, “Regulations governing entrance to the veterinary inspector examination” dated September 1, 1909.⁶⁸ This latter circular became the foundation for the BAI and hence Civil Service Commission’s veterinary institutions standards for many years. This series of recommendations was adopted by the AVMA for its school inspection program in 1912.

In his Resident Secretaries’ Report for the District of Columbia at the same AVMA 45th meeting in Philadelphia, Dr. B.T. Woodward noted,⁶⁹ “each year it [the USCVS] has granted its degrees to a small number of men. Its graduates are not now eligible to membership in our Association. Although having improved in a number of ways during the last few years, it is, according to Bureau of Animal Industry Circular No. 133... classified as a ‘B’ grade school.”

A year later, when BAI Circular No. 150⁷⁰ concerning entrance to the veterinary inspectors examination became effective on September 1, 1909, the USCVS was 1 of 15 in session institutions listed under Regulation XXIV, “List of Accredited Veterinary Colleges.”

J.P. Foster took issue with the revised list.⁷¹ He stated, “The separation of colleges into ‘A,’ ‘B,’ and ‘C’ classes as recommended in Circular 133, is modified by Regulation XXIV of Circular 150, by substituting for these classes a ‘list of accredited veterinary colleges.’”... “Included in this list of accredited colleges are 3 schools that appear in ‘Class B’ in Recommendation 13 of Circular 133. It is so evident that these schools have taken advantage of Recommendation 17 of Circular 133, that provided for recognition upon providing evidence sufficient to convince the Department that the minimum standard of requirements was being complied with; or that it was considered that these schools had been improperly classed in the first instance.”

New Building Constructed at 15-Year Milestone in 1908

During its first 15 years, the school that had started out with “four or five men” had grown to “a staff of eleven veterinarians, ten of whom are in actual practice.”⁷² There were another 4 professors who had MD, PhD, pharmacy, and law degrees along with a “practical horseshoer [or farrier] with 40 years of experience.” Moreover, “a number of these professors are also engaged in teaching special branches in other well-known institutions of learning.”⁷³

Having outgrown its facilities, being in need of expanded, upgraded teaching facilities, and possibly influenced by AVMA and USDA inspections for maintaining educational requirements,⁷⁴ a 5-story brick building was constructed in 1908⁷⁵ (Fig. 9). At a cost of \$38,000, it was located at the rear of Robinson’s Veterinary Hospital to “contain all the latest and most approved appliances for successfully teaching the art and science of veterinary medicine. Besides containing the lecture



Figure 9. Five-story building constructed for the USCVS in 1908.

Source: United States College of Veterinary Surgeons, Twenty-Third Year [prospectus], 1917; p. 3.

halls, bacteriological, histological, chemical, and anatomical laboratories, there will be the finest, best equipped, and most up-to-date veterinary operating room in the United States. This room will be in the form of an amphitheater, arranged so that 200 students can witness an operation at once....”

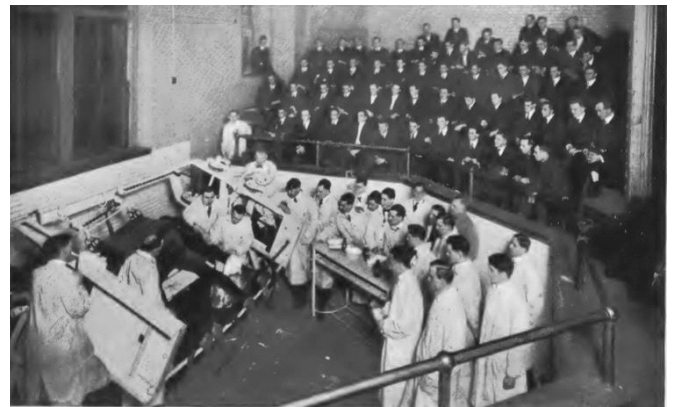


Figure 10. Surgical clinic amphitheater and operating pit.

From: *Views in and around-- the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons*. Washington, D.C.: The United States College of Veterinary Surgeons, [after 1908]. *U.S National Library of Medicine Digital Collection*, <https://collections.nlm.nih.gov/catalog/nlm:nlmuid-9504098-bk>

As described in a booklet published sometime after completion of the new brick and concrete building in 1908 and entitled, *Views in and Around—The United States College of Veterinary Surgeons*, a page on “The College Building” informed prospective students and others that:⁷⁶

The lecture halls, laboratories and dissecting rooms are all located under one roof. The building illustrated on the adjacent page was built and equipped especially for the purpose of veterinary education. It is five stories high, modernly equipped and from the standpoint of sanitation and lighting facilities is unsurpassed. The operating amphitheater has a seating capacity of three hundred, the laboratories are furnished with every facility necessary for the instruction of their respective subjects. Adjoining the College is a Veterinary Hospital where daily clinics are held and the students instructed in practical application of the various phases of Veterinary Medicine.

The *Washington Post*⁷⁷ noted that “One of the interesting features of the new hospital will be the operating table in the amphitheater, which will cost about \$2,000. It will hold a horse firmly, and permit of his being turned in any direction the surgeons sees fit” (Fig. 10).

Interestingly, it was also noted that, “with its large and superbly equipped new building for teaching...this college was recently rated ‘class A’ by a committee appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to investigate and classify the veterinary colleges of the country. This is the highest possible rating.”⁷⁸ As an example (Fig. 11), one of a number of advertisements appearing in the *Times Dispatch* from Richmond, Virginia,⁷⁹ between 1909 and 1912 claimed that the school had a “Class

A" rating by the US Government and that graduates of the 3-year program were eligible to take the civil service examination for federal veterinary positions.

By this 15-year milestone, the USCVS advertised itself to be "connected directly with...the largest private practice in the South, affording unlimited material for clinical work."⁸⁰ This claim has not been substantiated.

Moreover, as a consequence of expanding its facilities, the USCVS was one of 9 private veterinary colleges put on the new 1913 list of AVMA "approved" schools.⁸¹

Morrill Act Funding Wanted

In an attempt to convince Congress to share the benefits of the Morrill Act with the District of Columbia, George Prevost, M. Page Smith, and Edward C.W. Schubel from the USCVS pleaded their case for obtaining an appropriation before the Washington Veterinary Medical Association in February of 1910.⁸² This effort, which involved presenting Congress with a petition asking for a portion of the \$25,000 for District institutions, was in reaction to a "bill before the House whereby George Washington University [which had opened a new College of Veterinary Medicine in 1908] is trying to get the full appropriation of \$25,000." It was argued, "Surely, they are not any more entitled to it than we are. The Senate committee has made a favorable report for George Washington."⁸³ That is, they are willing to give this entire \$25,000 to this institution just because they have men who are very influential in the Senate and House." However, the House never acted on the bill and thus no Morrill Act funding was appropriated for either George Washington University or shared with the USCVS.

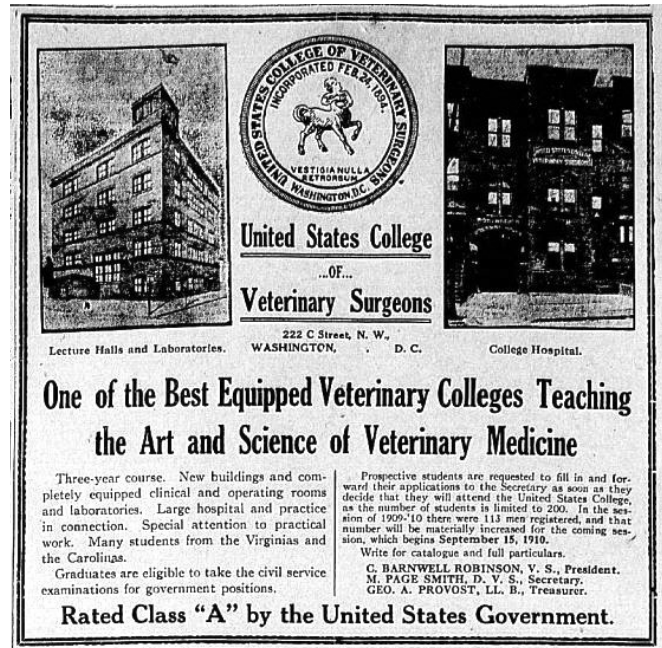
AVMA Accreditation 1913

At the AVMA's 49th annual meeting in Indianapolis in 1912, the Committee on College Investigations reported its findings.⁸⁴ At the Executive Committee's second meeting, a motion passed that rejected the application of the USCVS to be placed on the accredited list.⁸⁵

The following year at the 50th meeting in New York City in September 1913, the AVMA Executive Committee at its sixth session voted to recommend adoption of the Committee on College Investigations' list of veterinary colleges complying with requirements. The "United States College of Veterinary Surgeons, beginning with graduates of 1914" was among the 21 schools accredited.^{86,87}

Extracurricular and Social Activities

Along with basic science courses and clinical work, Robinson's school offered extracurricular activities. In particular, a 10-man rifle team had been organized in 1910⁸⁸ (Fig. 12). Participating in intercollegiate competition, matches were held against schools such as the University of Idaho, Louisiana State University, Washington State University, Cornell University, Columbia University, and George Washington University. Each team shot at its own range before telegraphing the results to the National Rifle Association for tabulation. In



UNITED STATES COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS
INCORPORATED FEB. 21, 1904
VESTISIA NULLA
LITTEBREM
WASHINGTON, D.C.

United States College
...OF...
Veterinary Surgeons

222 C Street, N. W.,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Lecture Halls and Laboratories. College Hospital.

One of the Best Equipped Veterinary Colleges Teaching the Art and Science of Veterinary Medicine

Three-year course. New buildings and completely equipped clinical and operating rooms and laboratories. Large hospital and practice in connection. Special attention to practical work. Many students from the Virginias and the Carolinas.

Prospective students are requested to fill in and forward their applications to the Secretary as soon as they decide that they will attend the United States College, as the number of students is limited to 200. In the session of 1909-10 there were 113 men registered, and that number will be materially increased for the coming session, which begins September 15, 1910.

Write for catalogue and full particulars.

G. BARNWELL ROBINSON, V. S., President.
M. PAGE SMITH, D. V. S., Secretary.
GEO. A. PROVOST, LL. B., Treasurer.

Graduates are eligible to take the civil service examinations for government positions.

Rated Class "A" by the United States Government.

Figure 11. Advertisement. *Times Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), 1910 Aug 28, p. 4.

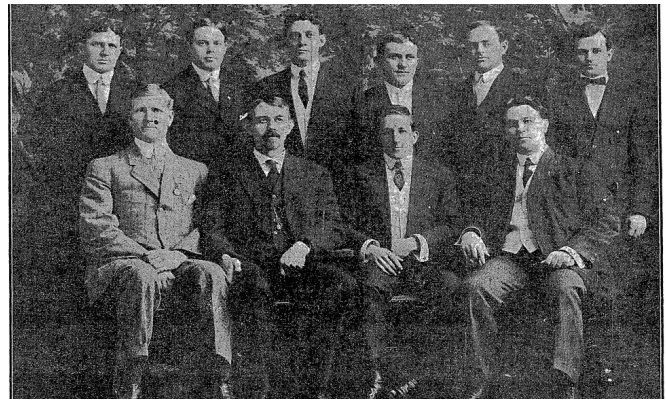


Figure 12. The United States College of Veterinary Surgeons intercollegiate rifle team, 1910. Source: The rifle team of the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons. *Washington Post*. 1910 Feb 21, p. 8.

support of this student activity, "the [USCVS] team has a fine 50-foot range, which the faculty of the college had placed in the large hall of the college building."

The college also produced a named student yearbook, called the *Centaur*, for a few years (1908 and 1917 currently exist), whereby each class chose officers and its own colors.⁸⁹

The Washington Veterinary Medical Association⁹⁰ was connected with the college and offered literary and social contacts for its faculty, practicing veterinarians, and student members. As noted, "Its chief aim is to enable the students to learn the art of writing, reading, and defending papers pertaining to veterinary medicine." Meetings were held weekly in the Assembly Hall, during which social matters were also discussed. An annual banquet was held as well (Figs. 13,14). Each student

was required to present and defend one paper per year. “That these meetings are both interesting and appreciated, is amply proven by the large and regular attendance of its members: also the fact that they are highly instructive is seen by the number of intelligent questions and answers which are given during the discussions of the papers.”

As noted in the *American Veterinary Review*,^{91,92,93} faculty and students belonged to Delta Sigma Beta, a Greek letter fraternity founded at USCVS in 1905, and came to annual “smoker” dinners dressed in formal attire at local restaurants for some years. At the dinner in 1909, Anatomy professor Dr. M. Page Smith, a 1906 USCVS graduate and one of its 6 charter members mentioned, “the good which the fraternity had done the college in the past and how it had helped to build up the enrollment from year to year,” while Professor of Jurisprudence George Prevost, an



Fig. 13. Veterinary Medical Association meeting in Assembly Hall. Source: From: *Views in and around--the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons*. Washington, D.C.: The United States College of Veterinary Surgeons [after 1908]. *U.S. National Library of Medicine Digital Collection*, <https://collections.nlm.nih.gov/catalog/nlm:nlmuid-9504098-bk>

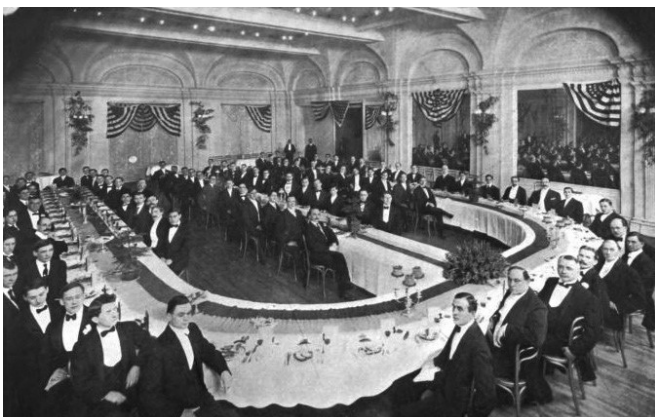


Figure 14. Fourteenth Anniversary Banquet of the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons, February 24, 1908, at Rauscher's. Along with entertainment and speakers, 125 faculty, students and invited guests sat around a horse-shoe shaped table decorated with the college's gold and black colors. From: *Centaur Class of '08*. Washington, DC: United States College of Veterinary Surgeons, 1908. *HathiTrust Digital Library*, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiug.30112100630679>

attorney, said, “These meetings of this college fraternity have done a great deal to bring the students of the college in closer relation, and is very much contrary to many opinions which have been given in regard to secret societies being a detriment to a college. The Delta Sigma Beta is a known exception and is upheld by men in authority at the college.”

For an unknown period of time, the Alumni Association of the USCVS also held annual meetings in the Washington, DC, area.⁹⁴

Robinson Steps Aside as Dean

In September 1912, Dr. Robinson stepped aside as dean⁹⁵ but continued to keep his other titles as President of the Board of Trustees and “a Hospital Clinist” or Clinician.⁹⁶ He was also serving as District Fire Department Veterinarian, pursuing several businesses unrelated to veterinary medicine, and overseeing agricultural interests at the 1,000+ acre farm in Virginia overlooking the Potomac River.⁹⁷ [A large portion of that farm was first leased (1919) and later sold (about 1943) to the US Government to form the Marine Corps Base at Quantico, Virginia.]

When Dr. Robinson retired as dean, Mann Page Smith, DVS (1884–1914), a 1906 USCVS graduate, took over those responsibilities.⁹⁸ Described by students as “his right hand man,” Dr. Smith had apparently frequently accompanied Dr. Robinson to meetings and other events. Born in Fayetteville, North Carolina, in 1907 he had married Dr. Robinson's daughter, Caroline (1884–1970), known as “Carrie.” In addition to first being instructor in anatomy, then Professor of Practice of Medicine and Operative Surgery, and holding the office of Secretary of the College Board, Dr. Smith also served as secretary of the Veterinary Association of the District of Columbia for many years, as noted in lists of scheduled association meetings that regularly appeared in issues of the *American Veterinary Review*.⁹⁹ Unfortunately, he died of typhoid fever at age 29 while in Charleston, South Carolina, in July 1914, leaving a widow and 2 sons.¹⁰⁰ His wife, Carrie, continued to serve as the College's registrar.¹⁰¹

As of February 1, 1914, Hulbert Young, VMD (1877–1955) (Figs. 15a,b), began serving as dean for a few undetermined number of years before relocating to Baltimore to become manager of a milk laboratory at the time of the 1920 US Census.¹⁰² After studying at the Columbian University for 2 years before it closed, he then completed his degree at the University of Pennsylvania in 1900. A District native, Dr. Young had been the District's Inspector of Dairy Farms and, in 1911, he became its Chief Food Inspector. From the founding in 1908 of the George Washington University College of Veterinary Medicine to 1913, Dr. Young was a member of the faculty, lecturing on surgery, physiology, and obstetrics. As of September 1913, he had taken the position of Chair of Surgery at the USCVS before being elected dean in January 1914, succeeding Dr. M. Page Smith. Dr. Young was said to have been “an able lecturer, progressive in his ideas, and possessed of a charming personality.” He was also president of the Board of Veterinary Examiners of the District of Columbia for a time.

The founder's son, C[harles]. Jabel Robinson, VS (1890–1949), followed some years later in the role as dean of the College. He held that position at the time of the school's closing in 1927¹⁰³ as well as being president of the Board of Trustees after his father passed away (Fig. 16). He was a 1917 graduate of the USCVS.

AVMA Discreditation 1917

In 1917, standards for veterinary education were being strongly promoted, and further attempts made at enforcement. That year, all of the veterinary schools had been visited by one or more committee members. Feeling that some colleges had not sufficiently made progress demanded by the times, the AVMA's Committee on Intelligence and Education¹⁰⁴ took definitive action by discrediting a number of schools at its 1917 meeting. That body recommended the USCVS be one of two schools dropped from its list of accredited schools.

When the USCVS applied for reconsideration of their case, the Committee conducted "a rather thorough investigation

of the conditions surrounding veterinary training [by the 2 schools] in the District." Their report stated that, "The United States College of Veterinary Surgeons has a reasonably good building and equipment for the operation of a school of veterinary medicine. The institution lacks, however, a resident dean and several competent instructors."¹⁰⁵ Since the George Washington University Veterinary College has "inadequate facilities and buildings and equipment to give satisfactory instruction..." the recommendation was made to amalgamate the 2 schools "so that the students of the United States College may receive the laboratory courses at George Washington University and the George Washington students receive the use of the building and equipment of the United States College for their courses in anatomy, surgery and medicine."¹⁰⁶

Furthermore, "in the absence of such a merger prior to the opening of the coming college year (1918) the Committee recommend that the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons be continued on the discredited list and that the George Washington College be automatically dropped from the list of colleges accredited by this Association."¹⁰⁷ Among other reasons, the AVMA Committee's action may have been a factor in the decision by George Washington University to immediately cease operations of that school in 1918, but it did not deter the USCVS' continued existence for nearly another decade.

On December 19, 1921, Dr. C. Barnwell Robinson died suddenly at home at age 62 of a heart attack after 35 years of practice as a veterinary surgeon in the District of Columbia.^{108,109,110} Survived by his widow and 3 children, he was buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Washington, DC.

Upon his death, the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association, of which he was a member, issued a condolence that included a Resolution of Respect, stating:¹¹¹

"...In 1891 he established a hospital in Washington, and on February 24, 1894, founded the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons, of which he was president until his death. This institution has grown from one small room to a spacious five-story building, and stands as a monument to his skill, energy and industry, and from which have gone forth many of his students to various parts of the country, who will cherish his memory and lament his departure.

He was a man of recognized ability and prominence in his profession and among men, and possessed a high moral character. He was a member of the Virginia State Veterinary Medical Association, the Maryland State Veterinary Medical Association, and the District of Columbia Veterinary Medical Association.

By his integrity and assiduity he won for himself not only a name in his profession and among men, but a neat little fortune, which he leaves to his children, together with a good name which "is rather to be chosen than great riches."

On December 19, 1921, he died in the 63rd year of his age, loved and lamented by all who knew him. He is survived by his widow, one daughter, Mrs. Carrie R. Smith, two sons, Charles and

**UNITED STATES COLLEGE
VETERINARY SURGEONS**

Opens September 16th.

No profession offers a more attractive future and no college gives its students more thorough and practical instruction.

The four-year course leads to the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine.

**Hulbert Young, V. M. D.,
Dean.**

Write for detailed information.
**222 C Street N. W.
Washington, D. C.**

Figure 15a. Advertisement. Source: *Washington Post*, Aug 30, 1916, p. 3.

**U. S. College
Veterinary Surgeons**

**Opens September 15. Day and
Night Classes.**

Located in the National Capital, where, in addition to our own modern equipment, there are accessible to our students the national libraries and laboratories.

The faculty is composed of instructors of high standing in the profession.

Recognized by United States civil service commission, United States bureau of animal industry, American Veterinary Medical Association.

HULBERT YOUNG, V. M. D., Dean.

Write for Catalogue P, giving detailed information.

**222 C Street N. W.,
Washington, D. C.**

Figure 15b. Advertisement. Source: *Washington Post*, Sep 13, 1918, p. 9.

COLLEGES

PHONE MAIN 2712

**UNITED STATES COLLEGE
of VETERINARY SURGEONS**

College Opens Annually September 15

C. Jabel Robinson, V. S., President Geo. A. Prevost, Sec. and Treas.

222 C STREET, NORTHWEST

Figure 16. Advertisement for the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons, 1923. Source: *Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia for the year 1923*, p. 148. *HathiTrust Digital Library*; <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015074642573>

Joseph, all of Washington, D.C., and a host of appreciative and sympathizing friends.

Therefore, be it resolved:

First, that this Association keenly feels the loss and deeply deplores the going of this eminent and valuable member of our Association; and that we bow in humble submission to the wise providence of the Great Physician who makes no mistakes; His will be done.

Second, that a copy of these resolutions be sent to the family of the deceased and that a page in the minutes book of this Association be dedicated to the memory of our beloved fellow-member.”

School Closing

Ultimately succumbing to the same fate as other early private veterinary colleges due to an increasing inability to compete along with low student enrollment, the USCVS suspended operations on June 15, 1927, after its 33rd commencement. Christensen¹¹² describes the period of the middle 1920s as “one of the lowest ebbs in the history of veterinary education in the United States” when “practitioners were pessimistic about of the future of their profession because of relatively low incomes, because of the alleged encroachment of municipal, state, and federal veterinarians upon the field of private

practice, and because of the unethical activities of some county agricultural agents and high school agricultural teachers.”

Four students received diplomas in the last class among the overall total of 419 trained veterinarians the school had produced.¹¹³ Never affiliated with a university, it would forever be known as “the last of the [early] private veterinary schools” in the United States or Canada.^{114,115,116}

When Mrs. Dora [Dorothy] F. Robinson passed away in 1943, her obituary noted,¹¹⁷ “*The widow of Dr. C. Barnwell Robinson, District Veterinarian for 33 years until his death in 1921, Mrs. Robinson carried on his school, the U.S. College of Veterinary Surgeons, until 1927. She kept it going to help rehabilitate World War veterans and it closed when all applicants had been helped in their training.*”

After the USCVS closed, Dr. C. Jabel Robinson continued to operate the Robinson Veterinary Hospital at 222 C Street NW for horses and small animals until his death at age 59 on November 17, 1949^{118,119} (Fig. 17). His obituary noted,¹²⁰ “Dr. Robinson...was a lifelong resident of Washington [for 30 years]. First turning to an architectural career, he was a graduate of Catholic University’s first class in that field in 1914. He then entered veterinary training in the United States College

**District of Columbia Veterinary Colleges
TIMELINE**

YEAR	EVENT	DEAN AND/OR FOUNDER
1891	Robinson’s Veterinary Hospital established	C. Barnwell Robinson
1892	National Veterinary College (NVC) founded	Daniel E. Salmon, Dean
1894	US College of Veterinary Surgeons (USCVS) founded	C. Barnwell Robinson, President and Dean
1896	NVC merged with Columbian University as its Veterinary Department (CU-VD)	
1897	CU-VD name change to Veterinary School, Columbian University (CU-VS)	
1898	CU-VS faculty propose offering a postgraduate-only curriculum CU-VS[NVC] closed because of lack of students	
1904	Columbian University name change to George Washington University	
1908	George Washington University College of Veterinary Medicine (GWU-CVM) opened	David E. Buckingham, Dean
1912	Robinson stepped aside as USCVS dean	
1918	AVMA proposed amalgamation of USCVS and GWU-CVM USCVS added to AVMA’s “discredited college” list GWU-CVM closed when removed from the AVMA-accredited institution list and Secretary of Agriculture forbade BAI veterinarians from teaching at colleges	
1927	USCVS closed as last private veterinary college	



Figure 17. Advertisement for Robinson's Veterinary Hospital, 1928. Source: *District of Columbia City Directory 1928*, p. 158.

of Veterinary Surgeons, was graduated in 1917, and was dean of the school at the time of its closing in 1927....Since that year Dr. Robinson had established an extensive practice here with offices at 222 C Street N.W....[and] also had done work in nearby Virginia and Maryland.”

Summary

“Always intensely interested in disseminating the knowledge of his profession,” Dr. Robinson is credited with founding the United States College of Veterinary Surgeons in Washington, DC, in existence for 33 years. While such a small private school could not compete despite its intentions, tenacity and shortcomings, this college should be recognized for having made a remarkable effort while serving as an example of the challenges faced by commercial operations in that period of educational development. The school’s motto, “Vestigia nulla Retrorsum” [translated as “No backward steps”], was surely appropriate for its role and contributions toward advancing the veterinary profession in the United States.

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